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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2017
TAGS: [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: FCC SUSPENDS FATAH'S PARTICIPATION IN THE NUG

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) SUMMARY: The Fatah Central Committee (FCC) decided on June 12 to "suspend" Fatah's participation in the national unity government (NUG). Fatah leaders report that some FCCs members urged that Fatah withdraw from the government completely, but that PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) rejected this step now and continues to press for a cease-fire with Hamas. The FCC will meet again June 13 (8:00pm local). END SUMMARY

FCC Debate: Diluted Response

¶2. (S) In a June 12 evening meeting, the Fatah Central Committee (FCC) decided to suspend Fatah's participation in the national unity government (NUG). Fatah leaders say this decision was an effort to pressure Hamas to negotiate following Hamas' refusal earlier in the day to discuss a ceasefire under Egyptian auspices.

¶3. (S) According to Fatah sources, some committee members including PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), opposed any drastic decision and said they feared a complete Fatah withdrawal from the NUG would exacerbate tensions and leave Fatah with no bargaining chips. Others, including deputy Prime Minister Azam al-Ahmed, reportedly favored a more decisive stand and complete withdrawal from the NUG and/or the PLC. Al-Ahmad has privately said if HAMAS refuses to agree to a cease-fire, the FCC will be forced into action. He criticized Abu Mazen's decision to suspend Fatah's participation in the NUG and said he supports total withdrawal from the government if HAMAS refuses to agree to an immediate ceasefire.

¶4. (U) Al-Ahmad on June 13 was quoted in press as saying that the FCC is still considering withdrawing from the NUG if the fighting continues. Al-Ahmad told the press that the decision to end fighting and maintain the NUG is in HAMAS's hands. "HAMAS leaders must choose if they want us to be partners in the government or break away."

Next Steps: Cease-Fire Efforts; More FCC Meetings

¶5. (S) Sources in the President's office report that Abu Mazen spoke by phone with Damascus-based HAMAS leader Khalid Misha'al, who promised to work toward a ceasefire.

¶6. (S) After the June 12 FCC meeting, some Fatah leaders said they are holding out hope for Egyptian-mediated HAMAS/Fatah talks on June 13. MG Burhan Hamad (Egyptian GID), the lead Egyptian mediator, is scheduled to meet HAMAS officials on June 13 at 4:00 p.m. local time in Gaza City. The FCC plans to meet on June 13 at 8:00 p.m. local time to discuss options in light of the ceasefire efforts. Fatah insiders say that such options include withdrawing from the NUG; dismissing the

government; declaring a state of emergency; and declaring the HAMAS Executive Force and the HAMAS military wing illegal.

Comment

¶7. (S) HAMAS has few incentives to agree to a ceasefire as long as it seems to be gaining control of more territory in Gaza. The more ground HAMAS controls when it comes to the table to negotiate, the stronger HAMAS's position will be.
WALLES